

Lilburne on the other, able at length to understand men of character and principle in different camps who never understood each other,

The eighteenth century is weak in political autobiographies compared with the seventeenth and nineteenth*. Its most substantial legacy is the survey of his wars by Frederick the Great. "Whenever I have a few moments to spare/' he confessed, " I am seized by the itch to write. I cannot resist this frivolous pleasure, which occupies me, diverts me, and makes me fitter for work/' Writing, indeed, next to conversation with Voltaire and other French intellectuals, was the chief relation of the first servant of the state. Every word of the thirty volumes in the collection of his writings published by order of Frederick William IV is in French, though his political correspondence is in German. In this faithful version even his grammatical errors are reproduced.

The King compiled a record of the first Silesian war directly it was ended by the Treaty of Bresku in 1742, but little of this narrative remains. After the Treaty of Dresden he described the second Silesian war, rewrote the story of the first, and added a sketch of Prussian history, describing the whole work as *Histoire de Brandebourg*. Twenty years after a longer and fiercer struggle, he wrote the history of the Seven Years War, based on his own annual surveys of the campaign, and prefaced by a sketch of the intervening decade of peace. Later on the taking of West Prussia in the first partition of Poland stimulated him to describe events after the peace of 1763. Moreover he now resolved to rewrite the history of the first Silesian wars, and chose for the whole series of his historical memoirs the title *Histoire tie men Temps*. Still later, after the Treaty, of Teschen, he wrote on the War of the

Bavarian Succession, connecting it with the earlier narratives by a sketch of the years 1775-8 and reshaping the earlier version of events from the peace of 1763.

The *Qewres ~Historiques* fill the first seven volumes of the collected works. Only the first, the History of the House of Brandenburg, which may be regarded as an introduction to the history of his own reign, was published during the author's life, though with many omissions. The record of his own achievement, which fills five volumes, was intended for his successor, not for publication; yet he took as much trouble over his task as if it were going straight to the printer. " Though this is destined to remain buried in the dust of the